

# CURRENT TOPICS

**A** ST. PAUL, Minn., dispatch carried by the Associated Press says: "Written with pencil on a sheet of note paper, a letter was received today by Mrs. John A. Johnson, from former President Roosevelt under date of November 15, stating that he had just heard of Governor Johnson's death and offering sympathy. The letter follows: 'On Sarfari, near Mount Sigon, Central Africa, November 15, 1909. My Dear Mrs. Johnson: While out here, far from all chance of hearing news with any speed I have just learned of the death of your honored and distinguished husband. I trust you will not think me intrusive if I write a word of respectful sympathy. I greatly admired your husband as an upright and honorable public servant and as one of those Americans who we like to believe are typical of our people as a whole. He is a loss to us all; a loss to good citizenship. With assurances of my profound sympathy and respect, believe me, very sincerely yours, Theodore Roosevelt.'"

**R**EV. J. M. REARDON, of St. Paul, speaking at the national convention of the Catholic Abstinence Union, said: "The great obstacle which bars the way to individual reformation is the ever-present saloon. Its door stands invitingly open to entice the unwary; its victims from the path of rectitude; its very presence is a silent, but almost irresistible call to indulge in strong drink. The saloon is the plague spot of our national life; and hence it is that the Catholic church is arrayed against it as an institution from which as from a Pandora's box, spread all the evils of the liquor traffic. The Catholic church is the avowed and uncompromising enemy of the American saloon; and it desires most ardently that this 'pestilential evil' be wiped out entirely that it may no longer curse the race."

**A** NUMBER OF republicans met at Lincoln, Neb., and organized the insurgent forces. At this meeting a state meeting was called for Lincoln, January 20, and the following resolutions were adopted: "Resolved, That we favor a state organization of progressive republicans to indorse a candidate for United States senator in opposition to Senator Burkett whose policy in the United States senate ought to be condemned by the people, and that a progressive republican ought to be elected in his place. Resolved, That we as progressive republicans of Lincoln hereby express our sympathy and heartily indorse the action of all genuine insurgents in congress and urge them to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer, and that a copy of this resolution be telegraphed to Congressman Norris." Later C. O. Whedon, of Lincoln, announced his candidacy for the republican nomination against Senator Burkett.

**S**ENATOR BURKETT made a hot reply to his Nebraska critics, charging that most of them were disappointed office seekers. He made a pointed attack upon H. M. Bushnell, former postmaster at Lincoln, saying that Mr. Bushnell was now an insurgent because Senator Burkett had not favored his re-appointment as postmaster. In a letter printed in the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal, Mr. Bushnell makes reply, denying that Senator Burkett has properly stated his motives. Mr. Bushnell adds: "Why can't you be honest in these things? I consistently maintained active association with my political party, using my influence for better political conditions in Nebraska. I voted for the men who elected you to the United States senate, hoping that time might bring convictions to you on the great questions at issue; that you might realize that the people of this state are entitled to more than 50 per cent of your attention on some one question at least; that the people of this state are not to be continuously fooled by having a representative on all sides of all questions, and that sessions of congress are more than the opening of pork barrels. Do you think you can put a stop to the consideration of your record by the people of this state because I as an individual once held office? Are all men who ever held a

public office to be disfranchised, and only those who glue themselves to, and can not survive without the sustaining protuberance which gives government milk are to have voice in public affairs? Do you expect to distract public attention from your record by publishing falsehoods about individuals? Is this your defense in voting for a tariff bill that violated the republican platform, in voting with Aldrich and the sugar trust, in voting for the harvester trust, in voting against free lumber, in standing in with the exaltation of a Ballinger and the beheading of a Pinchot? You have a lofty conception of the people of this state and their intelligence when you infer that you can blind them to what you are as a public official by making false statements about some one individual. The progressive republicans, whose faces are set against your alliances with Cannonism and your efforts to ride two horses going in different directions, are different men than you measure them."

**M**R. HENRY WATTERSON, writing in the Louisville Courier-Journal, concludes a long editorial in this way: "The Courier-Journal has small hopes of a tariff for revenue only through democratic agencies. As to the reform of the revenue, the democratic party went to pot under Cleveland. It again went to pot the last session of congress. But, even as Chase and Hamlin, Hale and Trumbull, original democrats, were required to form a successful anti-slavery party, so are Cummins and LaFollette, Bristow and Beveridge and Dolliver required to make a triumphant anti-subsidist party. To that end we should hate to go under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt, but nobody can fortell what will happen in the public life of America, whilst all of us know that politics makes strange bed-fellows."

**A**MONG THE early friends of Dr. Cook, the explorer, the Springfield (Mass.) Republican was conspicuous. Even now while admitting that it looks bad for Dr. Cook the Republican says: "It would be wrong, however, to assume, as the friends of Commander Peary, are doing, that the case has been definitely closed and that Cook must stand branded henceforth as the greatest impostor of all history. Many things remain to be cleared up. If word should now come that he had killed himself, no one would longer question the fact of imposture, but there would still be much to be explained. If, for example, he is a shameless impostor, why did he present so meager a case, when a very full and plausible one could easily have been trumped up? If, as so often has been urged against him, observational data could be manufactured by almost any one from the almanacs, sufficient to confuse if not to deceive the scientists, why was this not done? Would an impostor, having gone so far, have failed to make such a provision? \* \* \* And finally there remains to be explained the most remarkable and troublesome fact of all, to which we have before called attention. Many physical conditions obtaining at the pole were unknown and had been the subject of much divergent conjecture among scientists. An impostor might have guessed on all of them and guessed right once or twice. But by all the laws of chance no impostor could have guessed them all right, and this is what Cook did—measured by Peary's account. This fact alone is sufficient to keep the case open until further developments in satisfactory explanation of these strange features have appeared."

**P**RESIDENT TAFT sent to congress, January 14, his special message relating to conservation. The Omaha World-Herald gives this synopsis of the special message: "The special message of President Taft on the conservation of national resources contains nothing that had not been suggested in his public speeches. The only reference to the Pinchot-Ballinger matter is the suggestion that the results of the investigation are not needed to determine the value of the legislation he proposes regarding the public lands and expression of hope that congress

will not delay on this account. Secretary Ballinger is not mentioned by name but the intelligence and diligence with which the secretary has considered the matters under his jurisdiction are highly praised and the recommendations made in his annual report indorsed. Into the president's scheme of inland waterways improvement the Missouri does not enter save from Kansas City to St. Louis. An issue of \$30,000,000 bonds is advised for the completion of reclamation projects now under way, and relief of settlers on these projects is urged. The president declares that 'the vigorous prosecution of land frauds,' one of the 'noteworthy reforms' initiated by his distinguished predecessor, is being continued under his administration. Attention is called to the fact that the withdrawals of power sites since March 4, 1909, cover 229 per cent more streams than were covered by the withdrawals made prior to that date. Classification of lands according to use is declared to be one of the most pressing needs, so that they may be disposed of to private parties for agricultural purposes while at the same time the government retains jurisdiction and right over their mineral deposits."

**P**RINCIPAL KILPATRICK of public school number fifty-two, Manhattan, maintains that some of the best results which may come from the work in public schools are exemplified in character building. In this connection the New York World says: "The tragic story of Arthur Christ, who graduated from Public School No. 52 in 1908, would seem to show that the school may be doing a greater work than teaching facility in the multiplication table. This boy was one of those who was fatally burned in the recent celluloid factory fire in West Thirty-first street, New York. When the fire broke out and all were rushing out of the building for their lives Arthur saw young Charles Hetzel, a son of his employer, sitting in an office chair asleep or overcome with the fumes. Not thinking of himself, he rushed in and awakened the sleeping lad. When the boy woke up he seemed dazed, and by this time the flames were all about them, but young Christ did not think of abandoning him, but pulled him quickly out and to a window near a fire escape. Holding him in his arms he broke the window with his head and pushed him out first. When he followed he was so badly burned that he lived only a few days. He saved his companion, but gave his own life in the effort. He lived with his parents on Nagle avenue, in Inwood, and attended Public School No. 52 for eight years."

**H**ERE IS A story from Life printed by the Nebraska City Daily News: "A few days since some men were overhauling some household goods that had been stored a long time, in fact such a long time that the identity of the owner or owners had been lost. They were tossing the things about in a careless manner until when throwing a small box aside it came open and out rolled a pair of baby's shoes followed by some tiny ribbons and wearing apparel. The men all stopped work and looked at the package in silence. One man quietly stooped down and picked them up and one by one restored the articles to the box and again fastened it. It called to his mind a little pair of baby shoes which were safely tucked away in a drawer at home, he and his wife had placed there many years ago. While doing this a silent tear trickled down his cheek as he thought of the missing one and what perhaps those pair of little shoes and baby relics meant to the mother and father who had packed them away so tenderly and treasured them so highly. It might have been those worn by an absent daughter or son, who had perhaps gone away, done well or bad and forgotten the old folks and more especially the mother, while the mother or father had never for a minute banished them from minds. It might have been all of the remembrance of an erring son or daughter. They were dear to their parents and this father's heart turned to the absent ones, as he thought of his own and packed them away again."